

# **Georg Mertens - Cello Method: Contents of Volume 1**

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# **TIPS for using this Cello-Method**



- 1) *Play every piece - or number - at least once through*
- 2) *Once a piece has no mistake, it can be crossed out (through the number) and doesn't need to be played again.*

*Of course any piece can be kept to play for ever, but it doesn't need to be played.*

*That means no time is wasted, the progress is faster.*



- 3) *If after playing a piece through you really dislike it, you can cross it out (and never play it again).*

*Each section in the method has several pieces addressing the same musical or technical issues.*

*Not every single piece need to be practiced.*

*We learn more and faster by playing what we like and cutting to a minimum, what we don't like.*

- 4) *At least **one piece in each section** should be completed, but best two.*

*The sections are (the grouping is visible):*

*Vol. 1: 0-3 , 4-9, 10-15, 16-21, 22-27, 28-35, 36-40, 41-48*

*Vol. 2: 51-56, 57-60, 61-64, 65-68, 69-74, 75-80, 81-88, 89-100*

- 5) *Here are a few numbers **not to miss**:*

*In Volume 1: 4, 6, 18, 22, 43, 48*

*In Volume 2: 51, 57, 87, 91, 94, 100*



- 6) *Mark favourite pieces (with a heart or sticker); the best suggestion is having a **separate book with all the favourites**.*

- 7) *I recommend to start every practice during a term with a "warm up piece" of your choice and keep it for the term.*

*This should be one of the favourite pieces.*

*I learned musically and technically most on pieces I play anyway without mistake and by memory.*

*Once we know a piece very well, we can focus on tiny details, which we discover only after we can take for granted playing the notes correctly.*

# ***How to Practice ? - Good ideas***

1) **Returning home** after the lesson, I recommend strongly to **unpack the cello** straight away, ready to play on a stand, in a corner or on the ground, bow ready next to it.

Also the music on a stand or accessible, open on the page to start.

2) If possible I recommend playing after the lesson everything once through at home what is new or includes new information.

We have **two mind sets**: the one is the home mind set, the old way of playing.

The other is the teachers or lesson place set.

The way to introduce the new way of playing at home is playing everything new at home on the same day, writing information down after the lesson or record the lesson.

- **One day later 50% is lost** and the old way creeps in.

3) **Starting every practice with a slow scale** (any), 3 or 4 beats per note.

This scale warms us up, including sitting correctly, spike length ideal, tuned well, bow hold, bow control well, bow level and direction good, sound and intonation good.

This one scale saves us from being shocked by our first piece, which after not warming up may sound dreadful.

4) Following should a **warm up piece** of choice, a favourite we keep for about a term. This piece we play until everything is predictably good, no mistake, good sound, good intonation - best also by memory.

5) Now starts our variable practice program.

6) I find it important that **every practice has some little goal**: after this practice I want to play this bar / this section safely or much better.

This daily practice goal setting is great if we have very little time (because of maybe children or work pressure).

In 5 minutes we have achieved something.

7) It is better to **slow** down the beat of a piece drastically, play **strictly in rhythm** than skipping through irregularly from one hard passage to the other.

By slowing down the whole piece our mind learns to prepare accordingly to the flow of music. Also we can express already in a slower speed but we can't without any rhythm.

8) If it just doesn't sound right on a day, we might put the cello on the ground, walk a circle through the room and sit down again to play: it will sound differently!

9) If anything hurts - stop and take a break, mention it to the teacher.

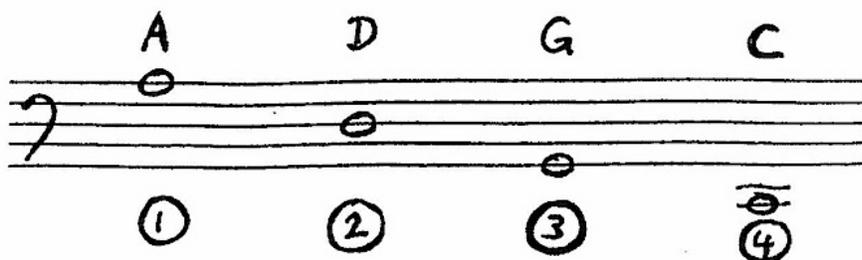
# GETTING STARTED

**O**

## The open Strings on the Cello

*Reading music for the cello is easy !  
The open strings are in convenient positions of the staff,  
easy to remember:*

*The **A** (1) is on the top line.  
The **D** (2) is on the middle line.  
The **G** (3) is on the bottom line.  
The **C** (4) is underneath the staff.*



*Keeping the **NAMES OF THE STRINGS** in mind:*

**A**   **D**ear   **G**iant   **C**ello  
or  
**A**ll   **D**rivers   **G**o   **C**razy

### The 2 BOW DIRECTIONS:

*The bow has two ends.  
The one end is called the “Nut” or “Frog”.  
The other end is called the “Tip”.*

*When we start from the nut we call it  
“down bow” (because of the violin!)  
the sign symbolises the square end: □*

*When we start from the tip we call it  
“up bow”, the sign is a pointy tip: ▽*



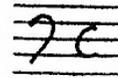
**1**

# “One, two, three, four, One”

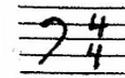
\* These notes are called “crotchets” or 1/4 notes; they are 1 beat long (a quarter of a 4/4 bar)



\* Next to the bass clef we find a “C”:

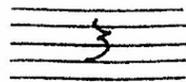


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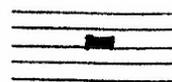


The “C” stands for Common beat, a bar with 4 beats, also written as 4/4.

**Rests:**



(1 beat rest)  
(a crotchet or 1/4 rest)



(2 beats rest)  
(a minim or 1/2 note rest)

\* Count the numbers of the beat loudly: 1, 2, 3, 4, 1 -  
and whisper the beats during the rests - 2, 3, 4

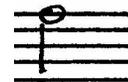
\* Start every new string with a “Down Bow” (∏)

Accompaniment to No. 1 & 2

(too advanced for students at this level)



2 **Minims** - or 1/2 Notes - 2 beats long



**Every string needs a different amount of bow:**

- \* *The A string is thin and needs to be played lightly, not too slow,*
- \* *the D string a bit heavier.*
- \* *The G string needs some weight and be taken slower,*
- \* *the C string very slow and heavy, especially start slow.*

**There is no rule how much bow to use for 2 beats, because it is different on each string.**

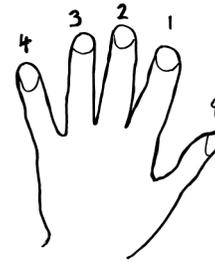
**Don't try to rush to the end of the bow, but stop where it naturally stops.**

**The bow needs to be played 100% straight and slightly tilted inwards.**

**Try out, on which spot of the string it sounds best.**

# The Fingers of the left Hand

The fingers of the left hand are numbered without counting the thumb, which has its own sign.



## Technique of the left hand:

- \* Put the thumb underneath the second finger
- \* The wrist needs to be straight.  
(A bend in the wrist makes the action of the fingers less effective)
- \* Naturally the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> finger stand more upright whereas the 1<sup>st</sup> and the 4<sup>th</sup> finger sit flatter on the string.

**3**

## Rain, Rain, go away

traditional

(pizzicato = plucked)



- \* Compare the 4<sup>th</sup> finger on the A string (note d) with the open D string. The open D string will vibrate, when the 4<sup>th</sup> finger on the A string is in tune.
- \* Stretch the 4<sup>th</sup> finger each time far enough.
- \* Push the fingers firmly down until the sound is clear.

**3 a**

## Accompaniment to “Rain, Rain go away”

Students at this level can play the accompaniment!



**For our young players!**

**More left Hand - this time on the D string!**

**3 Extra**      **Hot Cross Buns**      *traditional*



\* Compare again first the 4th finger, this time on the D string (note g) and compare with the open G string. The open G string will vibrate, when the 4<sup>th</sup> finger on the D string is in tune.

**3 Extra-b**      **Accompaniment to “Hot Cross Buns”**

**Students at this level can play the accompaniment!**

